FAMILIAR
LETTERS,
ON
MISANTHROPHY;
OR, A CALL TO THE
MISGUIDED:
ADDRESSED
TO A
FATHER and BROTHER.

By MERCATOR,
A MECHANIC OF BIRMINGHAM.

Curſe not the King, no not in thy Thought; and curſe not the Rich in thy Bed-Chamber: for a Bird of the Air ſhall carry the Voice, and that which hath Wings ſhall tell the Matter.

Eccleſiaſtes the Preacher.

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FAMILIAR LETTERS ON *MISANTHROPHY.*

LETTER I.

DEAR BROTHER,

IN theſe ſpeculative times, when the preſs abounds with the productions of writers, buſily exerting themſelves in the intereſts of princes, the revolutions of nations, or political controverſies; great and intereſting as their ſubjects may be, I have often thought the weighty matters and deep concern which reſted on my mind, would ſufficiently juſtify an attempt in that way, to convince you of your dangerous errors in ſuffering your ideas to be deluded, and your nature thereby depraved: but the reſolution of ſuch an attempt has frequently been ſuppreſt by that timidity of a conſcious inability, which is generally the attendant of a mind educated in the ſchool of adverſity, and depreſſed by obſcurity. I had likewiſe to regret the being ſituated in life with that part of mankind who have not the advantage or opportunities of reading thoſe excellent publications which fortify and enrich the

mind, by holding forth refutations of the new notions and new doctrines of which this age is ſo very fruitful.

Greatly have I lamented in ſecret my not being able to convince you of your danger, by reaſon, experience, and perſuaſion; the efforts of which, have only been productive of violent diſputation, heated animoſity, and perpetual jarring.

In infancy I may ſay our friendſhip was contracted, but alas! how unhappily in our riper years is this contraſted to meer indifference, the bond of natural affection and love nearly broken and diſunited, and that ſweet intercourſe which brotherly love, friendſhip, and virtue, countenances and invites us to partake, common prudence forbids us to taſte. And can I enjoy that ſatisfaction my conſcience and pure religion permits, while I ſee ſuch near and dear relatives withdraw themſelves from our holy church, and not warn them of their folly and madneſs? Arduous as may be the undertaking, and unqualified as I am for the taſk, it is my deſign herein ſimply to point out to you, as a rational being, the great folly of tamely expoſing and ſubmitting yourſelf to the artifices laid to enſnare the unwary; to convince you, on the authority and teſtimony of religion and virtue, that it is your duty, if you have any conſideration or firmneſs left, to break from your preſent connections with men who are unworthy the name of Engliſhmen, and again embrace that duty and religion which holds forth peace and happineſs. Should my labours ſucceed, how amply ſhall I be compenſated, and my

prayers

prayers anſwered, by again enjoying your friendſhip, love, and converſe; but that joyful unity, which is like the precious ointment on the head, or the dew of Hermon which fell on the hill Sion, your preſent diſtemperature will not admit you to taſte. I therefore, as your kind phyſician, would point out your diſeaſe without flattery; and you, as a patient, muſt endure the friendly hand that would miniſter a cure.

In entering on this ſubject, I feel myſelf at a loſs, at the ſame time I flatter myſelf if I do not afford the profit and pleaſure I wiſh, yet the honeſty of my endeavours will ſecure me the approbation of the parties I addreſs.

Our ſeparation commenced by our different purſuits in ſearch of knowledge; at the time I was engaged in the hiſtory of my native country, the rights of man, among other things of a bad tendency, was put into your hands, and occupied your whole attention. A popular divine, to whom you are attached, and of whom I ſhall have occaſion in the courſe of theſe letters to notice, obſerves, that the meeting of two clouds is the occaſion of thunder; but the lightning with which the clouds are previouſly charged cauſes the thunder: be it ſo or not, I leave to the philoſophic part of mankind to determine, and am content to admit the probability: my only motive for quoting a ſimily, from a ſcience of which I am ſo ignorant, is, that our oppoſite purſuits and ſtudies claſhing, was cauſe and occaſion ſufficient for that diverſity of opinion which cauſed a ſeparation in our family.

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The ſubſtantial truths and intereſting paſt events which the pages of my native country unfolded, produced in me a love and veneration for it and the laws which render it the envy and admiration of other kingdoms; yes, when I contemplate the ſame, I am proud of being an Engliſhman, and think it becomes every man to obtain ſome knowledge of that admirable conſtitution, liberty, and laws, which protect him; an impartial review of which, will fortify his heart againſt thoſe ſecret machinations now at work; enlighten his mind with uſeful knowledge; and at the ſame time furniſh it with pleaſing matter of enjoyment. An ignorance of the government of their country, and a propenſity to embrace any thing novel, is, I am convinced, the cauſe of many good diſpoſitions falling a prey to deſigning demagogues, wicked and groſs miſrepreſentors, and falſe teachers.

Novelty is a temptation which it becomes us in ſome degree to guard againſt; if we do not, it is poſſible the moſt valuable things may ceaſe to make impreſſion on us as good, but on the contrary, may be diſguſted and rejected as old: beſides, by giving way to this temptation, we deprive ourſelves of the power of knowing things well; nor can we receive or refuſe according to true judgment.

Here lay the fatal error which led you on to aſſociate with men whoſe minds are corrupted, and who, in their lawleſs aſſemblies, make no ſcruple of avowing hand and heart devoted to ſacrifice their country to ambition and lawleſs tyranny; men whoſe wiſh it is to pull down the nobleſt ſtructures the hand of heaven has raiſed, and to ſubſtitute human

human inventions: yes, I muſt ſay, the unprincipled books, companions, and ſocieties, which claim your leiſure hours, have poiſoned your mind to that degree, the greateſt bleſſings of divine providence are but half enjoyed and conſidered as the common courſe of nature; and the viciſſitudes of life, which every man rich or poor partakes, are ſet down as curſes, for which your country muſt be callumniated.

How much to be dreaded is that ſtate of mind which denies itſelf the pleaſures of ſociety; and how gloomy the man's diſpoſition who cannot heartily bleſs the land he lives in. It is ſaid, that a diverſity of ſentiment may prove a ſource of improvment; but how is it to be lamented when we ſee that by giving way to the preſent deluſion, the greateſt bleſſing and enjoyment of this life, namely, God's providing mercy in eſtabliſhing the church his earthly court, the harmony of ſaints, the taſting heavenly happineſs, and the bleſſed privelege of enjoying ſweet communion with God, is ſet at nought: ſo true it is, when once this dire infection gets poſſeſſion of the heart, religion ſinks of courſe; the ordinances and appointments of God are diſeſteemed; his miniſtry reviled; and this ſad miſanthrophy naturally leads to atheiſm. How clearly is this demonſtrated by taking a ſurvey of a neighbouring nation; where there is no equal to love, no ſuperior to revere: this is the wild enthuſiaſm which I condemn in you; and the political diſaffection which works upon this enthuſiaſm, inflames the mind with violent deſires for equal repreſentations, reforms in government, and even encouragtions,

ing the diſhoneſt, unjuſt, and unreaſonable deſire of a participation of the property of others.

I do not charge you with any private vices or views you may have in indulging theſe ſpeculative opinions —I am well convinced you have a nobler nature; a miſtaken zeal, and a falſe notion of patriotiſm, has poſſeſt your mind of every evil, and diſpoſſeſt it of every good thought; this, and a neglect of religious duties, has cauſed many to fall a prey to ſuch abſurdities: but let me beg of you to be convinced, the great end and aim of ſociety, the ſpur to induſtry, concord, and unity, nay, even public credit, muſt fall and ſink into nothing if men cannot be ſecure in what they lawfully poſſeſs; but it is not neceſſary for me to enlarge upon this levelling ſyſtem, which is ſo generally deſpiſed; ſo deteſted is it, that but few, even of the moſt depraved of mankind, could ever be brought to favor it: is it poſſible, I would aſk, for a perſon of this deſcription to enjoy the pleaſures reſulting from a generous friendſhip? is it poſſible for a ſoul ſo dead to divine love to exalt and enlarge itſelf to a capacity of that bliſs which we are allowed to hope for in contemplating the divine perfections of our Creator, and in pouring out before his throne, gratitude, love, and adoration? alas! I fear by what you are taught of truſting to the heart and natural reaſon, that peace of mind which the world cannot give is unknown to you, is what you never hope for, never pray for; but that it may yet be recovered and preſerved as a diadem ineſtimable, is the hope and prayer of your brother.

June 12, 1793. MERCATOR.

LETTER II.

HE THAT HAS LIGHT WITHIN HIS OWN CLEAR BREAST, MAY SIT IN THE CENTER AND ENJOY BRIGHT DAY: BUT HE THAT HIDES A DARK SOUL AND FOUL THOUGHTS, BENIGHTED WALKS UNDER THE MID-DAY SUN, HIMSELF IS HIS OWN DUNGEON.

MILTON.

DEAR BROTHER,

PERHAPS there is nothing more difficult than to convince men that their newly received opinions are erroneous; but how often do we ſee a little ſober reflection (with thoſe that will only balance what they have given up with what they have acquired) do more towards convincing and reclaiming, than the beſt arguments that can be adduced: there is a pride and prejudice in the human heart, which makes us too often reject the advice of a friend, by conſidering him as an opponent. That difference of ſentiment which is maintained to be a ſource of improvement, in my opinion, ought to be limited; for whenever it tends to be a diſ-ſervice to religion, it may be fatal; and different opinions, if they lead to dangerous conſequences, cannot be embraced with ſafety.

Unconſcious of any other motive than the intereſt of religion and the good of mankind I ſtand, and thus actuated, I ſhall, in this letter, fearleſsly proceed to point out a ſerious and progreſſive evil, which I have obſerved to be much practiſed in the town of Birmingham; namely, the diſtributing amongſt the lower order of men, books of a ſeditious tendency. I am ſenſible this aſſertion would be by many condemned as a calumny, or the offspring of an imagination prejudiced by bigotry; at the ſame time, I am well aſſured there may be thouſands of inſtances collected to prove the reality of what is here advanced.

I obſerved, that you was no ſooner infected with that mania I have before deſcribed, than your library, on a ſudden, became furniſhed with ſeditious books, ſermons, and pamphlets; inſomuch, you could, and were ever ready to, accommodate others—the reaſon to me was obvious; you were ſupplied gratis.

In vindication of what I have juſt now ſaid, I ſhall take the liberty to apply a remark, the truth of which, conſcious integrity would not ſhrink from perſonally anſwering. I am myſelf in the capacity of a clerk to a manufactory, which was lately viſited by a gentleman of extenſive opulence in Birmingham, a diſſenter, much and deſervedly eſteemed for the goodneſs of his heart, and one whoſe character ſecures him from cenſure, and reflects an honour on the faith he embraces. I muſt obſerve, he was not in the habit of viſiting that place; but little ceremony is neceſſary for a ſuperior

rior to introduce himſelf; a book was preſented with an earneſt deſire that it might be ſeriouſly conſidered, and recommended to the peruſal of others; the ſame was politely received, and the gentleman departed, no doubt, with the ſame officious zeal, diſtributing knowledge, and enlightening mankind wherever he went*. Should what I have here noticed come under the eye of the perſon alluded to, let me inform him, his chriſtian can-

* From this, and other circumſtances of a ſimilar nature which I have witneſſed, I have reaſon to conclude, if the infection had caught me, my little mantle-ſhelf library might have been amply and over furniſhed with ſeditious publications, rights of men, common ſenſe, irreligion, and nonſenſe. And certain I am, that this liberality has been, and is, much practiſed; but it would be prudent for thoſe bountiful donors to lay a charge upon thoſe they beſtow their enlightened gifts, not to expoſe their names: I have ſeen more than one imprudent inſtance of this kind, where, as a teſtimony of gratitude, in the firſt blank page (in addition to their own name) is wrote, the gift of ſuch a perſon; not to notice altogether the popular works of Paine, Prieſtley, &c. I have obſerved (perhaps by connections have been in the habit of obſerving) the favors of John Horne Tooke, Eſq. liberally extended; a gentleman better known by name in this country than by his perſon. I have often wiſhed in theſe times when benevolent ſubſcriptions are generouſly approved and carried into effect, that a plan was adopted for ſelling, at reduced prices, the writings of men who are exerting themſelves to defend their country againſt theſe innovating ſcribblers and diſtributers of ſedition. But perhaps I here ſpeak a ſatisfaction or a benefit I ſhould myſelf enjoy, rather than from any juſt view I can perceive of the practicability of counteracting the preſent evil: but this I will affirm, was I inclined to read books that have a ſeditious tendency, I could be amply ſupplied from more quarters than one, and confer an obligation by the acceptation of them.

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dour and chriſtian virtues have not ſuffered the leaſt dimunition—the force of education has influence on the beſt minds: let him not conſider this as a cenſure levelled at his conduct, but let him rather conſider it directed at an exiſting evil, to which, in a great meaſure, I attribute, and have to lament, the loſs of a father, friend, and brother.

But to return to the matter, the book in queſtion was the Rev. Mr. Edwards's letters to the britiſh nation, and the inhabitants of every other country: I was preſented with it the ſame evening; but not with that view of miſleading me which is uſual in theſe caſes; my employer being a worthy member of the eſtabliſhment. I am very far from wiſhing to add fuel to the fire, or to revive a flame that may be thought in any degree to have ſubſided; but a controverſial publication, ſo induſtrioufly and unſolicited put into my hands, I think myſelf at full liberty to make ſome obſervations upon.

Mr. Edwards ſeems to be anſwering a pamphlet written by the Rev. Mr. Burn, which he declares to be the joint production of the principle clergy of Birmingham and its vicinity. My attention was a little ſtruck with this aſſertion in the title page, " As the talents and literary of productions " of the Rev. Mr. Burn, may juſtly ſecure to him " a confidence that whatever appears as his work, " bearing his ſignature, will be received as ſuch by " the chriſtian and candid part of mankind." A grateful heart, a renewed conſcience, obliges me to ſay, a nobler work has been wrought by Mr. Burn, than any thing he could have in view relative

to

to controverſy with Mr. Edwards, and I am free to confeſs myſelf one of the numerous congregation who attend the ſacred truths, ſo forcibly held forth and promulgated by him, and who think themſelves under divine providence indebted to him, as a teacher, for a clear irreſiſtable light of the goſpel: through his convicting diſcourſes and earneſt exhortations, I have been rouſed from a ſtate of natural uncertainty, careleſsneſs, and inattention, to an active zeal, a chearful and conſtant attention to religious ordinances, and a full conviction that an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt is the one thing needful. But perhaps in this I digreſs, ſhall therefore paſs on to that part which comes under the head of church bigotry.

Mr. Edwards here entertains his readers with ſome curious and ludicrous anecdotes of church and diſſenting miniſters walking, running, and double-diſtancing each other at funerals. The various circumſtances and incidents which embelliſh this part are not of a heavy or ſerious nature, but it would be well if time could conſign to oblivion the frivolity of forty years ſtanding; or it would be better if minutes of incidents, the ſubſtance of which cannot amount to a charge, were not recorded and handed down to poſterity, to keep alive that ancient malignant ſpirit of party in theſe days ſo conſpicuous in that body of diſſenters.

Under the ſame head, I am ſorry to ſee that noble inſtitution, our Blue Coat Charity School, come under the ſevere cenſure of his pen; an inſtitution which has for ſeventy years reflected the greateſt

greateſt honour, as it now does the greateſt ornament, to the town of Birmingham; the elegant ſimplicity of the figures, and the inſcriptions which adorn this beautiful edifice, are expreſſive of every thing that can convey a pleaſing ſenſation to a generous heart*; nor are the laws which govern this numerous family of that ſingular nature which malice would ſuggeſt, but ſuch as are wiſely and generally adopted wherever there is ſuch laudable inſtitutions for maintaining and educating the infant poor.——But there are ſome contrarieties and inconſiſtencies ſet forth by Mr. Edwards, I cannot paſs over without noticing.

Mr. Edwards concludes a moſt virulent attack on the government of the blue ſchool, for not admitting the offspring of diſſenters, by obſerving, "Thomas Collett, the ſon of a diſſenter, was put "into the ſchool, and through the influence or "interference of the ſubſcriber who placed him "there, was permitted to continue in it." It appears rather unfortunate for Mr. Edwards, that he had it not in his power to produce a circumſtance more favourable to illuſtrate that total excluſion againſt which he ſo declaims, as we cannot ſuppoſe one ſubſcriber to have more influence than another. He then proceeds to ſpeak of the diſſenting charity ſchool, "Compare this," he ſays, "with the conduct of the diſſenters; in their

* Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

We cannot recompence you, but ye ſhall be recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt.

This School ſupported by voluntary contributions.
Erected A. D. 1724. Enlarged A. D. 1794.

"ſchool

" ſchool the children of churchmen not only re-
" ceive cloathing and inſtruction, but are allowed
" by an expreſs law to attend the public worſhip
" of the eſtabliſhment twice every ſabbath-day :"
I confeſs my aſtoniſhment when I read this, as I could not have thought the pious ſupporters of that inſtitution would encourage what was here ſet forth. I queſtioned a friend of mine that was brought up in that ſchool, who with a grateful heart confeſſed himſelf indebted to the inſtitution for an education, ſuperior to what parents in moderate circumſtances could give their children; but when I pointed out to him Mr. Edwards's aſſertion, of there being an expreſs law which allows an attendance on the worſhip of the eſtabliſhment, the youth bluſhed for his paſtor, and declared he never heard of it: But notwithſtanding this, and the ſtrict order and regularity obſerved in attending their own place of worſhip, it is poſſible there may be ſuch laws, and they have a ſecret or non-effectual exiſtence. Will Mr. Edwards ſay a boy or girl belonging to that ſchool, ever did, in compliance with their own or friends wiſhes, frequent the worſhip of the eſtabliſhment on the ſabbaths? no, no, that direct and manly form of expreſſion the wary gentleman cautiouſly avoids; and fond as he appears to be throughout his work of perſonifying whatever he advances, he here ſtops ſhort—his witneſſes to this cannot be found, or what is probable, never were. But theſe inconſiſtencies are of a piece with the reſt of his book, almoſt every page of which, is replete with envy, malignity, and ſlander; which I ſhall forbear to enlarge upon, leſt indignation ſhould tempt me to loſe ſight of the grand object I have

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in view: But for reaſons before given, I ſhall take the liberty to touch upon a few more general heads.

In the library buſineſs, which Mr. Edwards next recommends to my notice, I am pleaſed to ſee a little candour exhibited, and himſelf diveſted of that fiery zeal and antipathy which he diſcovers in the other pages. He ingeniouſly confeſſes, that the diſſenters introducing controverſial books (contrary to the original plan of the inſtitution, in not admitting books of religious controverſity) firſt diſturbed that unanimity which had long ſubſiſted, to the great advantage and improvement of the inſtitution. His tribute of praiſe to Doctor Prieſtley, for raiſing the library from a ſtate of inſignificance, and giving it ſtability and extenſion, may be juſt; but all theſe great merits and obligations, which are held forth as due to the Doctor, are cancelled by his party ſpirit, in introducing into the library, his hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity (a book which Mr. Edwards openly confeſſes in page 17, is calculated to make a man become a foe to the eſtabliſhment) in conſequence of which, he ſays, the Rev. C. Curtis intimated his ſurpriſe to the committee, for ſo far degrading the inſtitution, as to admit, contrary to the plan, books of religious controverſy; and which, however diſagreeable to him, obliged him to withdraw his name till general rules were adhered to: the Rev. J. James, and the Rev. C. L. Shipley, did the ſame, with many other perſons who were induced to ſubſcribe to the library, as it was held forth to the world that it ſhould not further religious controverſity.

Theſe are facts as ſtated by Mr. Edwards, and which appear to me ſufficient to cauſe animoſity, eſpecially as he affirms, in page 11, " the Doctor " himſelf for a long time ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the " introduction of controverſy:" what then could juſtify it? why Mr. Edwards does it in a word, and as it were with a ſponge wipes off the imputation of blame, by ſaying, " the Doctor at length con- " curred in the meaſure, becauſe the fund had be- " come opulent!" a poor defence this for ſo great a philoſopher—a wretched ſhelter for conduct that forced party ſtrife and contention.

How ably does this defender of the Doctor's mean artifices boaſt of the Birmingham library being firſt begun by the diſſenters—their extreme vigilance in promoting knowledge—their benevolence in not wiſhing to confine it (in its infant ſtate) to themſelves: they with a view of extending, enriching, and improving the ſame, invited the clergy and laity of the eſtabliſhment to join them; and to render the union permanent, controverſial books, and theological contentions, were to be conſidered as improper and diſgraceful to the ſociety. It ſeems the bait was ſwallowed, and with the aſſiſtance wanted, the library was reared—it flouriſhed—and in the end the fund became opulent: the aid before ſolicited for, was not now wanted—the fund was opulent; a cirumſtance that muſt be declared a ſufficient reaſon, by the great arbitrary governor, to violate, and in defiance of treaty, to force the eſtabliſhed clergy out; or by their continuing in, compel them to aſſiſt, contribute, and ſubſcribe, to his Corruptions of Chriſ-

tianity. This is obvious to the meaneſt capacity; who, like me, ſhould know nothing more of the affair than what Mr. Edwards ſets forth. The next point he diſcuſſes is the Teſt and Corporation Acts, which I purpoſe to conſider, and give you my opinion upon, the next opportunity that preſents itſelf; till when, I remain, with true affection,

Your brother,

MERCATOR.

July 14, 1793.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Every unneceſſary reſtraint is a fetter upon the legs—
Is a ſhackle upon the hands of liberty.
One of the greateſt bleſſings a peace can enjoy,
Is liberty: but every good in this life has its alloy
Of evil: and licentiouſneſs is the alloy of liberty;
It is an ebullition, an excreſcence—it is a ſpeck upon
The eye of the political body, which I can never touch,
But with a gentle, with a trembling hand, leſt I deſtroy
The body, leſt I injure the eye upon which it is apt to appear.

CHESTERFIELD.

DEAR BROTHER,

I WELL remember how heartily you concurred with the ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, and joined that numerous party who wiſhed to expunge from our code of laws, the Teſt and Corporation Acts. But the wiſdom of the Britiſh parliament thought proper to preſerve us from the artful attack in that quarter. Recent occurrences may convince every man (unbiaſſed by party or prejudice) of the neceſſity of that preſervation, and ſhew us, that while our church and ſtate are united, and form but one ſyſtem, our liberties and properties will be ſecure. Jarring diſcord and party feuds cannot undermine our conſtitution

while this harmony ſubſiſts. Should we ever ſee them have ſeparate intereſts, we may expect one to weaken the other by jealouſy and diſcord. May our country ever have legiſlators that will exert themſelves to repulſe ſuch encroachments: had theſe acts been repealed, others would have followed; and I ſhould not have wondered at an attempt being made to repeal the ſtatutes of treaſon made for the ſecurity of the Hanover ſucceſſion.

Thank heaven! we have a wiſe foreſeeing miniſter, juſtly in the confidence of his King, and who is looked up to, by all good men, as the preſerver of the Britiſh nation: let the enemies of this great man ever ſo much degrade him, they are generally ready to acknowledge him the greateſt politician, financier, and ſtateſman, in the known world: let them look to his conduct, foreſight, unſhaken fidelility, and attachment, to his King, on an unhappy occaſion, during the expectancy of a regent to govern this kingdom: had that regency been eſtabliſhed, our rightful ſovereign might have been for ever diſpoſſeſt of his crown: had the teſt and corporation acts been repealed, our country might have thereby become a prey to the enemies of the ſtate; a combination of ſuch occurrences would at leaſt have opened the way for French principles; and that dire faction, which has been introduced among us, would have advanced with more rapid ſtrides and greater progreſs.

Times and circumſtances have plainly proved and convinced us of the neceſſity there is for preſerving our church and ſtate from a mercileſs faction,

tion, and from invaders that would ſap the very foundation of it. May the laws which have preſerved our country from experiencing thoſe diſorders, remain uninfringed; and may God grant us a good, gracious, and royal King, till time ſhall be no more.

But why does Mr. Edwards make us ſo horribly to ſhake our diſpoſitions, with thoughts beyond the reaching of our ſouls, in ſuch woeful accents of tremendous language, as in page 71, where he, with wild enthuſiaſm, ſpeaks of the luſtre of reaſons triumph, the earthquake of liberty; the ſhock of which remoteſt nations ſhall feel: "Woe "to the concealers of truth—woe to the prieſt-"hood that places obſtacles in the way of reforma-"tion—woe to thoſe governments which are in-"fluenced by every motive but the happineſs of "the governed—let them liſten to voices which "call on them to reform, or we ſhall ſee them "fall like lightning from heaven." What was I to conſtrue from language like this, at a time when our diſaffected countrymen joined in the ſentiments of the French convention, threatening a general butchery? Believe me, my heart recoiled at theſe foreboding threats of woe and dire calamities—I ſhuddered for my country's fate, and was ready to exclaim with Haſtings in the play, "Have "we ſoon forgot thoſe days of ruin when York "and Lancaſter drew forth the battles? When, "like a matron butchered by her ſons, our groan-"ing country bled at every vein? When murders, "rapes, and maſſacres, prevailed? When churches, "palaces, and cities blazed? When inſolence and barbarity

" barbarity triumphed and ſwept away diſtinction, " peaſants trod upon the necks of nobles, low was " laid the reverend croſier and the holy mitre, and " deſolation covered all the land?" Theſe were my thoughts, and I confeſs, the impious civil wars, and Charles's martyrdom, was painted to my imagination in all its horrors; but may heaven prevent a war of this kind—a war, the crimes and horrors of which, nature ſhrinks from—a war, where every blow may murder a friend, a brother, a parent.

But the cloud which here hung upon my mind was ſoon diſpelled, by reflecting on the inferiority of that party, who hold principles equally wicked, dangerous, and unconſtitutional, as the times before alluded to; and power is wanted to revive in England, the horrors that are now felt in France, where we may contemplate a once great and flouriſhing kingdom now the ſcene of rapin, murder, miſery, and bloodſhed; where there is no laws—no crown to ſanction them if there were any—licentiouſneſs and cruelty moſt prevalent—robbers and murderers reſtrained by no laws, divine nor human—ſubject to no king, but inſtruments of tyranny and oppreſſion.

But to return to Mr. Edwards, who next proceeds to ſpeak of the loyalty of diſſenters, wherein he ſays, " Have they entered into a league with " the known foes of their country? Have they " conſpired to take away the life of a king, whoſe " family was in effect raiſed by their anceſtors to " the throne? With his leave I would take the liberty to ſpeak to theſe queſtions: and to the former

former, I muſt ſay, circumſtances collectively taken, and impartially viewed, would juſtify ſuſpicion, that a league is entered into with the known foes of this country—perhaps the ſocieties for conſtitutional information. Jacobin and correſponding clubs, addreſſing the convention of France, with the words, "Frenchmen, you are free—Britons are preparing to be ſo," is a proof of it; and if the ſentiments of diſſenters may be judged of by that ſpirit of proſelytiſm which appears in the works of their clergy, they muſt be conſidered as forming no ſmall part of this diſaffected body (in naming diſſenters, I would not have it underſtood that all who diſſent from the eſtabliſhed church are by me conſidered as leagued againſt it—God forbid that ſuch an idea ſhould be ſuggeſted. I am well convinced that wherever the goſpel of Chriſt is maintained, there can be no deſign to undermine the church; and let them be diſtinguiſhed by what ſect or denomination ſoever they may, here is but one religion—one family*.)

But referring to the next queſtion, that the diſſenters were inſtrumental in eſtabliſhing the preſent family on the throne: this muſt with truth be admitted, and we are reminded of it with all

* Mr. Edwards, in his definitions, affirms the diſſenters to be all proteſtants, differenced from each other only by different modes of worſhip and forms of diſcipline, but generally concurring in aſſerting the ſupremacy of their Lord and Maſter, Chriſt: But alas! I greatly fear a general concurrence of that grand important eſſential is not to be found or acknowledged in the ſchools of Arians, Socinians, Prieſtleyans, and French prophets.

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the abilities of the Hon. Mr. Fox. But let us for a moment look back to the origin of this once boaſted loyalty; and perhaps we ſhall find the ſame reaſons which actuated them at that time to a ſpirit of loyalty, would now operate with contrary effect; namely, their inveterate enmity to papiſts; for they now, in the moſt open, unequivocal, and direct manner, attack our mode of worſhip—our church governors and religious ordinances are reviled—and all churchmen declared papiſts. What have we then to expect from the avowed enemy and perſecutor of papiſts? this conſidered, no wonder our prelates and miniſters of Chriſt, ſome of the moſt eminent that adorn the church, are vilified and ſo inſolently libelled.

The groſs calumnies, and foul aſperſions, of Mr. Edwards, cannot be read without indignation by any well informed perſon; his pen ſeems to be directed by a temper and diſpoſition ſwoln as the ſtream of a torrent, bearing down all before it. His letters are artfully addreſſed to the Britiſh nation, and the inhabitants of other countries; artfully, I ſay, becauſe in Birmingham it is well known the dreadful riots of 1791, originated far differently than in his miſtatement*. That quantity

* It is well known in Birmingham, that had there been no meeting of diſſenters to celebrate French liberty, and diſſeminate French principles, there would have been no riots. The advertiſements requeſting the lovers of freedom to meet on that dreadful day, July 14, 1791; the cards of invitation, and inflamatory hand bills, circulated about the town, produced thoſe fatal conſequences. And I would wiſh the Britiſh nation in general

tity of anonymous information which he ſeems to have greedily ſwallowed, with his tales and obſervations made by women and country people, are too idle and frivolous to merit an anſwer. The ſupercilious manner in which Mr. Burn is charged with inaccuracy concerning the darkneſs of the night of the 14th of July, 1791, is of no importance; but that it was a dark night, is a ſimple truth, known equally to the peaſant as the philoſopher.

I was myſelf an affected ſpectator to a great deal of the devaſtation committed by the rioters, the fury of which, I am certain nothing but a ſtrong

general to reflect, if the ſame meaſures were adopted, and obſtinately perſiſted in by the diſſenters of any other place, if they would not, at this day, produce the ſame effects: that aſpiring ambition to the ſubverſion of all order, had diſcovered itſelf very much in Birmingham, at that time, by the principle diſſenters governing the town, and inſpired by the conſtant reſidence and tuition of Dr. Prieſtley, (who muſt be honoured as their chief.) Mr. Edwards's account of the Birmingham riots, was certainly wrote with raſhneſs and precipitancy; elſe why ſo contradict himſelf. In page 62, he denies the inſults they received in going, and the interruptions at their fete. He ſays, "Had "the diſſenters apprehended the conſequences, would they not "have come armed to the dinner, inſtead of ſeparating and "forming parties of pleaſure? muſt they not have been mad "not to have concerted meaſures for defence? But, (he pro-"ceeds) the fact was, every thing remained in perfect peace "for hours after the dinner; the report of a riot was conſider-"ed as a joke. Every one congratulated the other that it had "paſſed over in ſuch perfect peace, as to prove there had been no "foundation for the hints thrown out, and many would not believe "the report till the riſing flames convinced them." Now by this,

ſtrong military force could ſtop or have the leaſt effect upon. I heard the mob harangued by a number of reſpectable gentlemen near Mr. Ryland's houſe, begging them to deſiſt; aſſuring them the fatal conſequences would fall on themſelves: but what language could be held out to ſo many people, mad and intoxicated to that degree, that ſeveral periſhed in the devouring flames: in ſuch a ſtate of tumult and diſorder had gentlemen uſed harſh or violent language, their lives muſt have anſwered for it; nor was there wanting inſtances to prove this.

But the fertile invention of Mr. Edwards, ſeems put to the rack where to place the cauſe of

(his ſtatement) I ſhould ſuppoſe the ſagacious gentleman would infer that it was a ſilent plot, and no diſturbance expected. But how oppoſite to truth is this calm ſerenity deſcribed as above; and how does he contradict himſelf in page 55, where he ſays, "Is there no evidence that perſons were ſtationed at the door "of the hotel, to irritate, by perſonal inſult, the gentlemen "that went to dinner? Is there no evidence that the plan ſeemed "to be diſconcerted, by the mob finding the company gone "when they firſt began to indulge themſelves in violence?" In another place, I obſerve, he declares perſons were hired to juſtle and inſult them as they went to dinner. The fact is, before one and two o'clock, I ſaw ſome hundreds of people aſſembled before the door of the hotel; an exaſperated mob, threatening deſtruction, abuſing and perſonally inſulting the diſſenters as they paſſed: ſeveral eſcaped the back way—many I ſaw kept at bay, not daring to approach the hotel; and thoſe that did make their way, were buffetted and much abuſed: ſeveral were entirely repulſed.—This, and demoliſhing all the windows of the hotel, was the perfect peace and harmony he reports to have remained for hours at and after the dinner.

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theſe dreadful riots; his attributing them to the clergy and magiſtrates of Birmingham, is a mean and ſhallow artifice, difficult to be accounted for. Inſinuations ſo tending to prejudice the minds of men ought not to paſs unnoticed*. " Tis ſlander, " whoſe edge is ſharper than the ſword; whoſe " tongue outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whoſe " breath rides on the poſting winds, and doth be- " lie all corners of the world. Kings, queens, and " ſtates; maids and matrons; nay, the very ſe- " crets of the grave, this viprous ſlander enters." In my opinion, the detracter, who juſt evades the law, is equal with him who openly violates it; and his aſperſions ought to be conſidered as poiſoned arrows, intended to wound in the dark.

But whatever vile inſinuations, and however ſpecious they may be held forth, it is proper the Britiſh nation, and the inhabitants of other countries, ſhould know, that the clergy and magiſtrates of Birmingham are highly reverenced and reſpected; and that the moſt perfect love and unanimity

* When the Rev. Mr. Edwards wiſhed to embelliſh and adorn his work, by preſenting figures from the muſe of Shakeſpear, could none be found but Dogberry? it ſeemed to me that the prolific works of the poet were ranſacked to find the loweſt character, rather than for any judicious ſimily (admitting ſuch characters were intended to ſhoot folly as it flies); yet I muſt ever pity the ſacred orator, who, with the ſneer ſarcaſtic, deſcends ſo low to degrade men, who for ſo many years have filled the high office of magiſtracy with equity and juſtice irreproachable: and ſhould calumny threaten to ſtamp with infamy a more reſpectable than Madan; its ſting will die as that name in the town of Birmingham ſtands unimpeached.

is obſerved between the clergy and laity of the eſtabliſhment. Every artifice is made uſe of by Mr. Edwards, to poiſon and influence the minds of men againſt our church ordinances and goſpel preachers, men whoſe actions and conduct are conſiſtent with the profeſſion they adorn. But while we are bleſſed with ſuch ſpiritual guides as a Burn, a Madan, a Croft, and a Young, our Church will ſtand ſecure.

In page 51, Mr. Edwards ſays, "Smooth ex-"preſſions are made uſe of in the reply, to ſooth "and flatter the diſſenters." And here the teſty divine ſeems to ſpurn at the idea of a reconciliation with the clergy of the eſtabliſhment, and exclaims with Shakeſpear, "O diſſembling courteſy, "how fine theſe tyrants can tickle where they "wound." How unjuſt and malignant this quotation, and how applicably anſwered in the words of the ſame poet, "Nay, do not think I flatter, "for what advantage may I hope from that." The ſcraps of latin with which his work is interſperſed, is loſt upon me; and his quotation from the beautiful and difuſe meteaſtation is to me of diſuſe, or as preaching in an unknown tongue: nor can I, in mine ignorance, wholly comprehend his concluding threat; reminding us of an approaching day of vengeance, when he ſays, "Reaſon is to "triumph—when their cauſe ſhall be tried before "an impartial tribunal—when replies and pro-"clamations ſhall have no effect—where they will "face their adverſaries without the leaſt appre-"henſions." I confeſs myſelf at a loſs even to gueſs at what tribunal he alludes. Can it be to that

that great and awful day of judgment, when all animoſities ſhall ceaſe; when every evil ſhall be done away through the interpoſition and mediation of a bleſſed Redeemer; when we ſhall be one fold, under one ſhepherd? Certainly no! his language and declaration muſt bear the conſtruction of (what I hope is ſtill more diſtant) a French tribunal, where natural and corrupt reaſon is to attempt to triumph over divine revelation.

I ſhall cloſe my remarks on this extended publication, anticipating the pleaſing reflection, that the Britiſh nation, and the inhabitants of other countries, have more regard to real facts than to meer pomp of words and miſinformation; it is a diſſembler that turns his eyes to ſee if the world looks on him; it is a vain pretender that pays his tribute to God, only to impoſe upon men.

There can be no danger apprehended by the church, from thoſe writers, who, without temper or modeſty, break in upon morality and government, and unjuſtly load with calumny and ſlander, thoſe names ſo truly reſpected. In viewing ſuch conduct, I confeſs myſelf to have been incautiouſly led aſtray from the grand object that firſt invited me to be diligent in a good work, or at leaſt a more pleaſing theme, which I hope I ſhall not loſe ſight of, nor want opportunity of purſuing. In what I have advanced, I do not wiſh to incur the cenſure of a ſingle individual. The town of Birmingham has been my conſtant reſidence from my birth, and as a free citizen thereof, I conſidered

ſidered myſelf at liberty to condemn what I knew to be the extreme of miſtatement and exaggeration.

The diſſenters I have been much in the habit of aſſociating with; the generality of whom, I truly revere: to the bounty of one of them, I owe what little education I ever had; and am perſuaded, if the Rev. Mr. Hawkes, and Mr. Blythe, had continued in their miniſterial ſituations, the town of Birmingham would not have experienced thoſe riots which excited the attention of the whole kingdom.

May the examples of thoſe pious men juſtly remain as a ſtanding proof of that peace and unanimity which did ſo long, and might ever, prevail; may the preſent miniſters of that reſpectable body of men join with thoſe of the eſtabliſhment in promoting the true intereſts of religion and good order; and may the diſſenters in general unite in the wiſhes and commendations ſet forth in a work of the Rev. B. Carpenter's, miniſter of the diſſenting congregation, at Stourbridge, with which I ſhall conclude this epiſtle: "May the "church of England never ceaſe to bear unſpot-"ted and unſtained the glorious motto, FEAR GOD, "HONOUR THE KING. It is a motto to which I "have not the leaſt objection. And if actions "are as good proofs of loyalty, as profeſſions; if "thoſe that pay the trueſt honour to the King, "who keep that peace of which he is the con-"ſervator, and obey thoſe laws of which he is

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" the guardian, the diſſenters can bear this motto
" as unſpotted and as unſtained as their brethren
" of the eſtabliſhment. But they may adopt one
" which comes from authority as reſpectable, and
" which perhaps is more expreſſive of their pecu-
" liar profeſſion: RENDER UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS
" THAT ARE CÆSARS, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS
" THAT ARE GODS."

I remain,

Thy friend and brother,

MERCATOR.

Auguſt 7, 1793.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Dire neceſſity, that man ſhould war with man; aſtoniſhed reaſon ſhudders at the thought: yet as long as rapine and injuſtice are, it muſt be ſo.

LONGINUS.

DEAR BROTHER,

THERE was a time when you and I did not concern ourſelves about politics; and then we generally concurred in condemning whatever had a tendency to diſturb the peace and tranquility of our country; and I am certain you have bartered this ſatisfaction for a narrow ſpeculation, which inſtructs you to condemn every thing. That ſentiment of Mr. Pope's, "Whatever is, is right," has given the diſputants of the age occaſion to diſplay their talents, but there is a poſſibility if the poet had lived in theſe days, he might have caught the preſent diſaffection, and exclaimed, Whatever is, is wrong; for (as Shakeſpear ſays) "there be "of them." But I cannot help thinking the ſituation of Old England far different from what is deſcribed by her rebellious and diſaffected ſons; and that gathering ſtorm which ſeemed to threaten it

it is in a great meaſure blown over. During our national diſtractions, we found an exchequer ready to ſave and retrieve our ſinking credit; the ſalutary effects of which, have been proved.

It is pleaſing to ſee the effuſions of loyalty which every town in England is ready to ſhew to the perſon of their royal King and his government; and in ſpite of that vigilence which is made uſe of to delude us, it is evident that there is a ſpirit of loyalty generally prevailing; and thouſands with a firm and ſteady attachment are ready to declare with that true patriot, Edmund Burke, " that " which is printed at the bottom of his heart, " ſhould flow out with his breath and blood: it " would affect him even in thoſe moments to think " this country ſhould hold any connection with a " ſort of wretches that diſgrace the name of man, " even in the loweſt ſtate of nature; whoſe hands " were died in blood, and whoſe names ought to " blotted out of the catalogue of humanity;"—we ſee the majority of our ſenate compoſed of ſuch men.

We ſee in theſe dangerous times, our venerable clergy exerting themſelves to ſuppreſs ſedition, and check rebellion, ſolemnly exhorting us to ſtand faſt in that liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us free. We are bleſſed with a proteſtant King, who makes the laws of his kingdom the ſtandard of his conduct; whoſe happineſs it is to reign, and who does reign, in the hearts of his ſubjects. In him we ſee a royal father freely expoſing his illuſtrious ſons to the toils and turmoils of war—to hardſhips and

dangers. Let us then warmly and unanimouſly affect our King, and look upon him as the miniſter of God unto us for good: for ſecurities like theſe, let us be thankful, and praiſe that God, by whom kings reign, and princes decree juſtice. In the progeny of our King, we ſee the ornaments and defenders of our civil and religious rights ſo trained up, and ſo conducting themſelves, as to reflect a luſtre on the dignity of their birth: may providence preſerve us from the enemy of all mankind—from the common enemy of all good government.

I would not be thought to exult in the miſery of human bloodſhed and the calamities of war, but among the curſes inflicted upon us by the fall, I believe war to be one, and not the leaſt, for by it we are deprived of that felicity the world enjoyed when in a ſtate of innocence; and ſince it is decreed that nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom, many evils attend us; but when ſeditious conſpiracies and rebellions rear their monſtrous heads to overwhelm our land, it becomes us to be zealous of our civil and religious rights and liberties—it becomes us in times of ſuch danger to unite and cruſh whatever has ſuch an evil tendency. It is certain there is at this time a ſpirit of diſaffection exiſting in this kingdom; it is nurtured by irreligion and ſupported by philoſophical and logical arguments: ambition has ſhook hands with rebellion, and they have vowed to proceed ſtep by ſtep to dethrone our legal ſovereign King GEORGE.

Fired

Fired with a love of my country, and alarmed for the welfare of thoſe with whom I am dearly connected, induced me to enlarge and purſue politically this letter, in hopes of reclaiming a brother, who is ſo far loſt to himſelf, as to declare he is an enemy to our laws, and of no religion; and who has connected himſelf with ſocieties inſtituted to overturn the laws of the realm; ſocieties who, in their ſecret and clandeſtine meetings, idolize and pour forth their libations to republican deſpotiſm, and communicate in time of war with the enemy of their country; who conceal the moſt wicked and progreſſively deſtructive deſigns under the maſk of freedom: but theſe ambitious and reſtleſs deſigns have been ſeen through by our wiſe legiſlators, and counteracted by that ſpirit of loyalty, and that generous, unconquerable, and virtuous attachment, which every honeſt man entertains for his native land—it is an honourable and praiſeworthy partiality, which will ever be found in England, to triumph over the abettors of republican deſpotiſm.

But it aſtoniſhes me that we ſhould be told by our ſenators, and thoſe who beſt know to the contrary, that no ſuch diſaffection exiſts, that it is a falſe alarm, a manœuvre of government, and a calumny on the people. Even this has been avowed by the Hon. Mr. Fox, and ſupported with arguments that would almoſt make a man forget he had the power or faculties of thinking: ſo certain it is, that eloquence, in men of bright parts and great powers, is ſo great as to induce ſome people to credit things which have neither actual

nor poſſible exiſtence. But who can deny the fact notorious, and ſay, the minds of men have not been invaded; that unthinking men have not been invited to rebel? Whatever arguments may be adduced in contradiction to theſe aſſertions, it is a fact, too ſtubborn to admit of a doubt, that equality has been preached to the moſt illiterate men, who have been taught to think themſelves entitled to an equal ſhare in legiſlation, government, and property*.

I cannot

* That cuſtom is a kind of ſecond nature, I can truly ſay in my own experience to have verified; it has for ſome time paſt been cuſtomary with me, ere I addreſs myſelf to ſleep, to read, write, or indulge myſelf in private meditation. Habit has rendered this a kind of ſweet relaxation from the cares and fatigues of the day. Indulging this my uſual propenſity, I laſt night was reading an author, famous for recording the ſentiments and ſpeeches of the Hon. Mr. Fox, and where that great orator laments, in ſtrains pathetic, the great loſs which community in general muſt ſuſtain from the total and entire deſtruction of the library and elaboratory of Dr. Prieſtley, " a perſon whom he " names but to revere." I do not wiſh to impoſe upon you any unneceſſary hearſay evidence, but could " a tale unfold" which might mitigate the painful feelings of a perſon leſs ſuſceptible than the Hon. Mr. Fox. But, in doing this, I would borrow the manner and method of the Rev. Mr. Edwards, and ſay, can no evidence be produced that ſome part of the valuable library and elaboratory of the Doctor was preſerved from the ſons of tumult and demolition? Would not Mr. Worton, a man of known veracity and eminent in his profeſſion, ſay, that at the time of the Birmingham riots, a meſſenger came from Mr Kenrick's, the grocer, to his manufactory, requeſting ſome perſon to come and inſpect ſome iron works; that he, Mr. Worton, himſelf went, and having occaſion to go in the ſtore rooms of

Mr.

I cannot help noticing the conduct of the Hon. Gentleman above-named, who lately in the Houſe of Commons ſo ironically ridiculed the idea of the divine right of kings, affirming the houſe of Brunſwick to have a greater right than divine right, they

Mr. Kenrick, he was amazed to ſee large quantities of valuable books in diſorderly heaps, an orrery, &c. that he expreſſed his aſtoniſhment to an old friend (Rochley Johnſon) a painter, who was then and there at work; that the ſaid Johnſon aſſured him what he ſaw there was the property of Dr. Prieſtley, and that it came there in three carts loaded. Such is the ſubſtance of what Mr. Worton has often in the honeſty of his heart with pleaſure declared, becauſe he thought the world was not deprived of all the accumulated labours of ſo great a man.

In further ſpeaking of the Birmingham Riots, Mr. Fox declares, the mob, without proper exertions being made uſe of to ſuppreſs it, reigned triumphant for near a week in this rich and populous country,—it would be well if the Hon. Gentleman was undeceived in this, and informed that the mob (compared by Mr. Edwards to an elephant) did not reign, nor was it ſeen, half a week. It appeared on Thurſday evening, July 14, but committed no devaſtation till very late that night, except breaking the windows of the hotel: On Friday it reigned triumphant; on Saturday it was not ſeen in Birmingham, but three or four houſes were deſtroyed about Moſeley and Kingſwood; on Sunday all was quiet, and the military arrived.

When the Hon. Mr. Fox urged the propriety or expediency of ſatisfying the claims of the diſſenters by one general aſſeſſment, he no doubt knew the danger and impracticability of ſuch a meaſure. Was I, in imitation of theſe learned gentlemen, to attempt at paraphraſe, I would ſay, we have tempted this elephant, and the unruly animal with indignation ſpurned upon us; but we will rouſe and diſturb him again by endeavouring to manacle him.

being

being the ſovereigns of their own elections, the choice of the people, the will of the many, &c. But till our King becomes a tyrant, he will be conſidered as heaven's vicegerent, his perſon ſacred, and every honeſt man will think it his duty to protect it; but this temporal elective principle, on which (alone) Mr. Fox ſeems to ground our loyalty, tends in ſome meaſure to leſſen, if not diſown, the dignity, tradition, and authority, of the holy ſcriptures; at leaſt it is giving things the appearance of human invention, which may, without crime or ſuperſtition, be conſidered as proceeding from a ſuperior direction.—But the placing a confidence in the ſupremacy and authority of holy writ is not admitted in this age of reaſon; perhaps it is contrary to the faith and practice of a ſect the Hon. Gentleman is in gratitude bound to ſerve with his utmoſt powers. But it is obſerved, theſe effuſions of loyalty, from an elective principle, proceeds from a party who are ſtrenuous advocates for frequent elections; and in a ſpeculative view of this reſtleſs ambition, it appears the ſame principle which demands annual or triennial parliaments, elections, and reforms, would demand as frequent choice of kings.

With reſpect to theſe annual or triennial parliaments, ſo loudly called for by theſe precipitate changeable beings, I think the nature of our Britiſh Conſtitution muſt be miſunderſtood; that harmonized mixture of monarchial, ariſtocratical, and democratical forms ſo equally mixt as to give us the benefits of each, cannot, I ſay, be well and juſtly conſidered by thoſe who are ſo far prejudiced as to

wiſh to deſtroy this equal balance of the three eſtates which form our excellent conſtitution; but thoſe ſalutary branches adopted by our anceſtors for the ſecurity of our real liberty, though they are calculated to check arbitrary power in any one of themſelves, yet we ſhall ever find them vigorouſly united and combining to repel the odious deſpotiſm of the French ſyſtem.

Fire is an acknowledged good ſervant but a bad maſter, and was we ſubjected to thoſe frequent elections, ſo much power would be thrown into the ſcale of the people, that we ſhould become a perfect democracy, party ſtrife, and contention, abſorbing the minds of the people; and the people governing the ſtate would expoſe our flouriſhing land to be a prey to the tools of faction; depraved reaſon would predominate, and the licentiouſneſs of France be found in England:—I remember it was once ſaid by the Hon. Mr. Francis, that "he "who was a good merchant muſt neceſſarily be a "bad governor."

Idle murmurs, groundleſs diſcontents, and jealouſies, ever was and ever will be found under the wiſeſt adminiſtrations; and was this new-fangled Painite ſyſtem of rule to take place, what miniſter would be ſecure in his meaſures; he would certainly be compelled to expoſe or relinquiſh his deſigns at ſuch ſhort periods as would ſubject him to the cenſure of his enemies, who are always numerous and ever ready to carp at him and counteract his deſigns be they ever ſo laudable: the force of this remark I lately placed before a perſon

perſon who glories in the character of a Jacobin; he acknowledged the juſtneſs of the obſervation, but ſo contracted were his ideas, that he could not ſee the neceſſity there was for a miniſter or any one to guide the helm of the ſtate; perhaps he here ſpoke (though unwittingly) the ſentiments of all who would render the meaſures of a miniſter fruitleſs.

I have, in this letter, briefly, though imperfectly, ventured to ſtate my political ſentiments, the principles of which, are too deeply rooted to be ſhaken by every fantaſtic giddy change, and in which I am ſo far from thinking myſelf ſingular, that I believe them to be ſuch as are adhered to by the generality of Engliſhmen, and by all who prefer journeying through life on the even plain, to grovelling in the thorny ditch, or running on the dangerous ramparts. My political views carry me juſt as far as to wiſh that the peace and welfare of our country may be ſecured from the wicked deſigns of her enemies. I ſhall conclude this with the pleaſing reflection that, under divine providence, with ſuch a conſtitution, ſuch Britiſh repreſentatives, and ſuch a miniſter at the helm, we ſhall be permitted to ſail quietly and peaceably in the great ſhip, which is the higheſt ambition of

Thy friend and brother,

MERCATOR.

October 19, 1793.

LETTER

LETTER V.

All the world's a ſtage, and
The men and women meerly players.

SO ſaid Shakeſpear. But if we take a ſurvey of the buſy actors on this great ſtage, we ſee many of them fill the parts allotted them very improperly. Now, turning, or rather confining, this idea of the poet to the theatrical world (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) a more familiar and juſt mirrour is held up; for there we ſee the player who acts the beggar well, applauded; while he who portrays the gentleman, nobleman, or emperor, ill, is diſgraced. It is truly becoming in every one to raiſe himſelf above the vulgar, but what and who the vulgar are ſhould be by every man duly conſidered. The man of riches, let his thoughts and inclinations be ever ſo baſe, is generally courted, while the poor mechanic, who is cheerful in labouring for a moderate ſubſiſtance, ſhall be looked upon as ranking with the vulgar; but how much, in fact, is he above the vulgar, or the man of riches that lives only for himſelf? it would

be well if every man would think none above him but for his virtues, and none beneath him but for his vices; here is the equality to be wiſhed, and it is here we ſhould find the true baſis of diſtinction.

I was led into theſe reflections by obſerving thoſe men whoſe condition in life place them above the vulgar, too generally neglect to cultivate and conciliate the affection of thoſe in more indigent circumſtances, when at the ſame time they ſee birth, dignity, and even titles, thrown aſide and diſowned for no other views than that of ſeducing their fellow-citizens from the path of rectitude, due ſubmiſſion, and good order. But it becomes every man (particularly at this time) to be firm and unſhaken in his principles, and to reſiſt with manly reſolution the falſe colours which are exhibited by deſigning men, remembering no degree of life is mean; unſhaken honeſty in every ſtation feels a ſecret pleaſure peculiar to itſelf, whilſt the man who ſwallows the pernicious draught of diſaffection, though he may endure the accuſations of others, yet, he cannot free himſelf from the internal combats and ſecret agitations of his own breaſt.

It is my intention in this (perhaps my laſt epiſtle) to addreſs a few words by way of caution and advice to thoſe of my own rank, who are liable to have their minds corrupted by a party, evidently ſtimulated by miſchief and ambition to throw ſomething into our eyes, and thereby lead us blindly to deſtruction. And I will venture to ſay, there are but few but what have in ſome way or other been attacked

attacked by theſe invaders of peace and tranquility, who are numerous, and the more dangerous, as many of them are men of underſtanding. Hence it is we ſee things, which are not entirely groundleſs, moſt ſhamefully and villanouſly exaggerated; this malecontent diſeaſe does not lay in the underſtanding, it is an evil ſeated in the heart. For inſtance, if a moody diſpoſition is found, his weak part is attacked, by comparing the golden days enjoyed by our anceſtors, with the calamities of the preſent age.

There certainly is, and ever was, a praiſe due to paſt times, which may give cauſe to cenſure the times preſent; and there were declaimers in every age who availed themſelves of this advantage, in exalting the times paſt, by abaſing the preſent. The now exiſting diſaffected part of mankind have in this the ſame advantage with their predeceſſors; it certainly is an advantage, becauſe evils are not compared with evils, or if they were, the calamities that are paſt are in a great meaſure forgot by not being now felt, when leſs calamities, by being now experienced, make ſtronger impreſſions. I believe the times have been, when all the ideal fantaſtical experiments on government have been made which are now ſo vainly wiſhed for. An impartial attention to the periods of our own hiſtory will ſhew us there is nothing new or wonderful in the preſent doctrine held forth by deſigning men to enſnare the unwary, inviting them to rebel and refuſe allegiance to what the hand of heaven has directed; paſt occurrences there recorded may convince us divine wrath has been inflicted upon

our land for ſuch wicked and ſtubborn oppoſition: the ſame will likewiſe ſhew us that Great Britain never enjoyed ſuch a long ſucceſſion of encreaſing wealth, peace, and tranquility, as under the preſent of government, by King, Lords, and Commons.

But I muſt advert a little further on the preſent race of declaimers, among which, I include our reſtleſs tavern orators*, who with the zeal and aſſiduity of lawleſs hirelings, infeſt the companies and ſocieties of good men, arraigning (in language moſt foul) the conduct of our legiſlators with all the conſequence of a Fox, or a Sheridan, with as little candour too, and as diſtant an eye upon truth. Theſe detracters, as I before obſerved, know themſelves ſecure from that contempt they deſerve, by their ſituations in life—ſuch is our partiality towards a barren metal, called gold, that the poſſeſſor of it ſhall be permitted to expreſs his crude conceptions, and grovelling ideas, in language nothing ſhort of treaſon; in language for which the inferior dependent would be juſtly deſpiſed—perhaps kicked. Theſe enemies of civil ſocieties, though poſſeſt with the requiſites of impudence, falſe information, and eloqueuce, yet they generally find

* It is curious to hear theſe degraders of our miniſter (Mr. Pitt) repreſent him as the parſimonious man and effeminate milk ſop, and as the profligate and the drunkard. I have heard Jacobins violently contending with each other which of the extremes characteriſe him. But ſuch malevolent attacks upon ſo elevated a character, can proceed from none but thoſe who are unworthy of common ſociety, and who juſtly deſerve to be excluded from all converſation.

it

it neceſſary in harranguing and impoſing upon their friends, to avail themſelves of thoſe forcible arguments which are exhibited or ſet forth in the ſpeeches of their brethren in the ſenate (even there exaggerating as their fancy dictates, and decorating rank falſhood with the veſtments of truth) a little induſtry only is neceſſary to imitate or refine upon ſuch patterns*.

Among the many evils to which by our natures we are familiariſed, there are none which perhaps hold forth more ſubject matter of declamation than war. Dreadful indeed is it in its nature and operations; and to meditate on the ſpeeches of ſome of our ſenators (who with marks of apparent horror ſhrink from the idea of war) one would wonder how it ever ſhould be accounted glorious; but it is a fact, that the party who now there picture its horrors and repreſent it as ſo inhuman and ſo deſtructive a calamity, have, on trivial inſult being given, been ſtrenuous advocates for war, and in the year 1787 declared that our country would degrade itſelf by not entering into a war with France. I would aſk what policy or what humanity could juſtify a war then, and not now, was our country then threatened with a convulſion, which, if we ſhould tamely ſubmit to, would introduce anarchy and deſtroy our religious liberties—is it to be urged that we had greater inſults from France at that time than

* May I learn to be content in the humble ſtation God hath placed me; but rather let me be dumb than poſſeſt of ſuch aſtoniſhing abilities, and exert them in a corrupt age, ſo as to render myſelf a ſtain or blot in the eyes of my country.

now, or that we had a war forced upon us, or that the French were a more barbarous and uncivilized people than at this period? No, all theſe arguments we muſt viſe verſa, and perceive that the declamation now held forth of the inhumanity of war, is nothing more than a determined oppoſition to the meaſures of miniſtry, whether war or peace*.

I have read much of war, of its cauſes and effects, but ſhall ever think the preſent one moſt juſtifiable; it having for its object, not only the peace of France and the peace of Europe, but our own permanent happineſs: it is a war unprecedented by any other, as it is not to add to our dominions, nor is it as heretofore to prevent the aggrandizement of a French monarch (which was never equal to the ambitious views of the now reigning faction,) but we war to preſerve the domeſtic comforts of our uſeful labour and public worſhip, under the generous influence of our mild and benign goverment; we are at war to guard this our excellent conſtitution againſt a nation transformed from civilization to the moſt ſavage brutality; and does it not become us to arm in ſuch a cauſe? ſhall it be deemed inhumanity for Engliſhmen to defend all that is dear to them? No! and I am perſuaded that none but the Robertſpiers, Dantons, and Barreres, of our country, would wiſh to deprive us of ſuch ineſtimable pri-

* I fear there are many of theſe pretenders to humanity who do not ſufficiently condemn the inceſſant uſe of an inhuman, barbarous, and unchriſtian engine, called a Guilotine.

vileges

vileges by pulling down the noble fabrick our anceſtors have reared. But, thank heaven, we have hitherto been preſerved, and it becomes us to be grateful to that vigilance which characteriſes the governors of our land, who have been ever diligent to counteract ſuch wickedneſs, ever ready to damp the fire brand of the incendiary, and preſerve us from the bloody horrors of a civil war.

But the promulgers of ſedition, in their thirſt for ambition, and rage for proſelytiſm, are too apt to exceed the bounds preſcribed in this land of liberty, a vice I cannot but think our laws too tardy in ſuppreſſing; and we find it neceſſary for the good of ſociety that thoſe who are determined to act in open violation of the mild and beneficent laws which protect them, ſhould feel the force of the equally juſt, yet ſterner. It was ſaid by the Attorney General, on a trial for a libel, " that to " puniſh any dangerous or offenſive writings, which " when publiſhed ſhall on a fair and impartial trial " be adjudged of a pernicious tendency, is neceſ- " ſary for the peace and good order of our nation " and religion; and the only ſolid foundation of " civil liberty. Thus the will of individuals is " ſtill left free, the abuſe only of the free will is " the object of legal puniſhment, neither is any " reſtraint laid upon the freedom of thought or " enquiry. Liberty of private ſentiment is ſtill " left—the diſſeminating, or making public, bad " ſentiments, deſtructive of the ends of ſociety, " is the crime which ſociety corrects. A man " may be admitted to keep poiſon in his cloſet, " but not publicly to vend them as cordials."

Thus

Thus you ſee how mild, reaſonable, and generous, are our Engliſh laws; and it muſt be pleaſing to every honeſt man to live in a land whoſe exiſting laws place liberty in times of war upon a different footing from times of peace and tranquility: is not the reflection melancholy, that wicked looſe principles ſhould be permitted, to the injury of ſociety and dividing of families? ought they not to be ſuppreſſed, and the delinquents puniſhed? moſt certainly.

Perhaps there is no character more deſpicable than that of a ſpy, and he ſeldom eſcapes without that puniſhment due to his iniquities; but why is he looked upon in ſo obnoxious a light? becauſe he is the enemy of that country he reſides in, and his machinations are bent upon the ruin of it; but it muſt be confeſſed that the country whoſe ruin he ſeeks, is to him but a local and temporary reſidence, and logical arguments may plead for him danger, intrepidity, allegiance, and patriotiſm to his own country. But what can be ſaid of the man, the contemptible wretch, who is ſo baſely and totally degenerate as to live and act in the character of a traitor towards the place of his nativity; who would tranſgreſs, violate, and betray that country which the ties of nature, birth, and education, ought to render dear to him. The two characters I have here been attempting to deſcribe, are in a great meaſure ſynonymous, and the object of both call loudly for the utmoſt ſeverity of puniſhment, yet if commiſſeration is due to either of them in their detection, it ſurely is to the ſpy, who may plead loyalty and attachment to the

the legiſlative inſtitutions of his own country. But let me forbear, nor longer dwell on a ſubject ſo hateful, and characters ſo deſpicable; let me conſider myſelf addreſſing a brother, who, though he has been miſled, may yet return to the path of rectitude—let me conjure him, ere he blindly walks too far in the track he is in, to halt, reflect, and guard againſt obſtinacy.

Corrupt nature, in its loweſt ſtate, muſt confeſs there is infinitely more merit in retracting an error, than wilfully remaining in darkneſs; and in changing your political principles you have recent precedents in great and exalted perſonages; turn your attention to the Lords Sheffield, Fielding, and many others of equal eminence, who have for years been in oppoſition to miniſtry, but when the peace of their country was invaded, when anarchy appeared and threatened deſolation to our land, what was the conduct of theſe generous Britons? they put away all trivial diſcord they entertained or might have had with miniſtry, joined them, rallied round the ſtandard of the throne, and declared themſelves ready to defend, with their fortunes, lives, and perſons, their native land from a faction evidently ſtimulated by rapin, havoc, and devaſtation.

Mark the conduct and feelings of the hon. Mr. Windham, a gentleman who conſidered the fate of his country paramount to every concern. He greatly regretted parting from his hon. friend Mr. Fox, a perſon whom he ſincerely eſteemed, and with whom he confeſſed he had been long in

the habit of friendſhip; but he declared he muſt coincide with thoſe he had been in political hoſtility with, and reprobate the principles of ſome of his friends and aſſociates; he confeſſed he had his attachments, and thoſe attachments might have ſome influence on his judgment, but upon a ſubject of ſuch importance, he was determined to be governed ſolely by a ſenſe of duty. He confeſſed he could not agree with his hon. friend Mr. Fox, in hardly any of the ſentiments he expreſſed—they differed either upon principle or the application of principle. The queſtion at preſent depended on the ſtate of the danger of the country, a queſtion too important to admit of any ſacrifice to party feelings. He aſked whether the country was in that danger or not? and on this ſubject he conceived there could be only one ſentiment. His hon. friend conceived the preſent appearance of danger only to be a manœuvre of government: but he was of a far contrary opinion, ſince government muſt poſſeſs extraordinary powers indeed to excite ſo general an alarm throughout the country. Societies had been eſtabliſhed in every place; we could go no where without being convinced of it; the whole country rang of it; every man knew of ſome danger, and no man knew of all; it was heard of in every company, it was ſeen in the confident looks of ſuch as wiſhed it. With regard to the freedom of diſcuſſing ſpeculative opinions—the ſolution on that point depended on two queſtions, the one was a queſtion of policy, the other of right: and the hon. gentleman, Mr. Fox, would doubt of neither. The art of diſſeminating opinions, which was ſo ably defended, and had of late

late been exerciſed with ſo much ſucceſs, took its firſt riſe in the ſociety for conſtitutional information, it was thence tranſplanted into a neighbouring country, and having produced the aſtoniſhing effects, which ſome people had thought proper ſubjects of admiration, it was brought back again to England, and was now purſued with the utmoſt induſtry; for there exiſted a conſtant correſpondence of the republican ſocieties in this kingdom with thoſe in Paris; a reciprocal communication of ſentiment between Engliſhmen in France, and Frenchmen in London.

Mr. Windham juſtly proceeded in obſerving theſe efforts to diſſeminate pernicious doctrine on the ſubject of civil government, were dignified by the name of political inſtruction, but the very term inſtruction, even in the beſt of cauſes, implies coercion upon the mind, and whether the people be inſtructed from a pulpit that they are to obey the laws, or from a Jacobin club that they are not to obey them becauſe they had been made without their conſent, they were equally precluded the power of thinking for themſelves. The advocates for this inſtruction talked much of the progreſs of reaſon, but when they applied themſelves to ignorant minds, muſt not their reaſoning be ſuch as ignorant minds only can comprehend; and ought not the progreſs of ſuch reaſon be prevented? it was ſaid that enquiry was the road to truth, and the fact generally ſpeaking might be allowed; but then it was flowing into its own channels and ſeeking its proper courſe.

Such is the outlines or ſmall ſketch of the political opinions of Mr. Windham, his ſpeech in full is fraught with manly ſincerity, diveſted of party prejudice. Well and happy is it for us that the generality of our legiſlators are diſtinguiſhed for ſuch integrity. But the hon. gentleman I have thus particularly noticed I ſhall ever revere, his conduct on many occaſions muſt render him dear to every lover of his country; his ſentiments when called for on Mr. Fox's motion (for ſending an ambaſſador to France) did honour to his feelings. He declared it was with pain he roſe to deliver his ſentiments, becauſe they differed from his hon. friend Mr. Fox, whoſe judgment he admired, and whoſe heart he venerated; but he felt ſome conſolation that though he was obliged to differ from his friend he hoped he would reſt aſſured he did it from the pureſt motives. He conceived the houſe ſhould not acceed to the motion, that it would ſully the dignity of this country to hold any communication with France, were gentlemen aware of this intercourſe; in proportion as it would lower us in the ſcale of public opinion, in the ſame proportion it would raiſe thoſe with whom it was held; and could Engliſhmen bend the ſtubborn ſinews of their ſouls and level themſelves beneath what their anceſtors would have ſhrunk from with an involuntary murmur of indignation? would it not be time enough to ſend an ambaſſador and humiliate when neceſſity compelled us to it? then the neceſſity would apologize for the diſgrace, but to do it in a voluntary manner was what he never could bring himſelf to; how, ſaid he, muſt this negociation be conducted

by

by a miniſter from the crown, a miniſter of talents and of a high ſenſe of the importance of his office. Where was the man that would aſſume the ambaſſadorial robe only to ſully it, and what was the tone in which he was to treat? was he to talk of the faith of treaties with thoſe who had violated all treaties? was he to avail himſelf of the powers of reaſon with a people drunk with ſucceſs? was he to talk in a ſupplicatory line, would not that betray meanneſs and fear? was he to talk in an authoritative tone, that could be done without ſending an ambaſſador to Paris. He hoped we were not drove to this dilemna—he hoped we had not ſo far degenerated from our anceſtors. Deſpondency even in the midſt of danger never compoſed one of our features, courage ſtill was ours—a high ſenſe of honour ſtill was ours—theſe were handed down to us unpolluted, and he truſted we would hand them down to poſterity in the ſame unſullied ſtate. He admired the noble ſtructure of our conſtitution in the diſpoſition of the rights of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. Thus did the hon. Mr. Windham forego every paſt conſideration which party, prejudice, or attachment, might have impreſſed upon his mind; his noble mind ſcorning to ſuffer his reaſon to be biaſſed by connections. When his country was in danger he ſhook off thoſe connections in a manner and in language even his enemies muſt admire. May his generous reluctance in withdrawing his attachments be a ſtimulous and induce many to follow his example; the conſideration and the hope of that induced me to point him out to a brother as a perſon worthy of imitation.

I muſt

I muſt conclude theſe letters, earneſtly exhorting you to return to a ſenſe of duty and religion ſo eſſential to your peace and happineſs, deſiring you to conſider and duly weigh the ineſtimable priveleges and domeſtic comforts you muſt expunge from your breaſt to make room for the receiving ſuch atheiſtical notions and wicked principles as are held out. The chief end of ſociety is, that we ſhould reap advantages, but what advantages can enſue from a ſet of wretches, who, with a ſhew of learning and natural reaſoning, publiſh, diſtribute, and impoſe upon us, their crude conceptions; who with an ambition of appearing more wiſe than the reſt of mankind would diſſent from them and ſacrifice their country, and by refining upon the perfections of human nature would extirpate religion and propagate infidelity; the grave diſputant ſays, an author that " reads, " writes, and ſpends his time in convincing the " world that he is no better than a brute, ought " to be whipped out of a government as a blot " to civil ſociety and a defamer of mankind. I " love, ſays he, to conſider an infidel, whether " diſtinguiſhed by the title of deiſt, atheiſt, or " free-thinker, in three different lights; in his " ſolitudes, his afflictions, and his laſt moments: " a wiſe man that lives up to the principles of " religion and virtue, if we conſider him in his " ſolitudes, as taking a ſurvey of the univerſe, ob- " ſerving the mutual dependence or harmony by " which the whole frame or ſtructure hangs toge- " ther, beating down his paſſions or ſwelling his " thoughts with magnificent ideas of providence, " makes a nobler figure in the eye of an intelli-

" gent

" gent Being than the greateſt conqueror amidſt
" all the pomp and ſolemnities of a triumph.
" On the contrary, there is not a more ridiculous
" animal than an atheiſt in his retirement, his
" mind is incapable of rapture or elevation, he
" can only conſider himſelf as an inſignificant
" figure in a landſcape; and wandering up and
" down under the ſame terms as the meaneſt ani-
" mals about him and as ſubject to as total a mor-
" tality as they, with this aggravation, that he is
" the only one among them who lies under the
" apprehenſion of it. But if you would behold
" one of thoſe gloomy miſcreants in his pooreſt
" figures, you muſt conſider him under the ter-
" rors or at the approach of death, when tears
" of compunction and ſelf-abhorrence ſeize him,
" loathing himſelf in his own ſight."

Oh! then, for God's ſake, lay before yourſelf the ſad conſequences of neglecting the glorious privileges held forth to you of embracing a religious life, ſhun thoſe teachers whoſe ſchemes oppoſe religion by a ſyſtem of philoſophy, who prophanely attribute things of the greateſt importance to a combination or concurrance of natural cauſes; who delight in the ways of their own finding out; who profeſs to know God but in their works, and thereby avoid the glorious rock of Chriſt. Conſider how dangerous it is to glorify theſe worldly human perfections which are only placed in bones and nerves. The greateſt philoſophers and moſt learned teachers of this weak, unfounded, ſelf-ſufficient doctrine, muſt acknowledge we are born in ſin and conceived in iniquity:

what

what more can be learned from them, than that the wiſeſt man to-day may be an ideot to-morrow, all their endeavours to ſatisfy themſelves in ſuch intricacies are loſt in endleſs mazes and uncertainties, unable to clear up their doubts. Thoſe teachers who have only the power or light of nature to truſt to, muſt be weak, languid, and deficient of authority, to give weight to ſuch doctrine; and whoever is ſatisfied with what unaſſiſted reaſon diſcovers, or fancies himſelf enlightened by their precepts, though he may boaſt of his reaſon, he is very far from being in the true ſtate of a chriſtian. Who then would leave the bright the glorious certainty, the evangelical truths of the benevolent goſpel, to explore and grovel in the dark intricacies of human conceptions? can any thing be compared with that open and clear light which the reſurrection to everlaſting life ſtands in the ſcriptures? how viſible and connected is that harmony between the old and new teſtament, and how fully accompliſhed is the prophecies in the perſon of our Saviour Chriſt. What a beautiful and expanded ſcene is here held to the view of every man: how extended, how unlimited, is the mind of that man who contemplates between a ſtate of nature and a ſtate of grace, in the former we find nothing but earthly, periſhable, doubts and perplexities, in the latter a crown of righteouſneſs, not made of periſhable materials, immortal, incorruptible, refulgent, and far exceeding all comprehenſion or human conception: learn then to value the ſcriptures as your inheritance: avoid thoſe atheiſtical notions (before they are too deeply rooted) which lead even to the aboliſhing

of

of the ſabbath, but embrace your church and the proper teachers thereof, and enjoy in peace and godlineſs our returning ſabbaths, conſidering them as the bleſſed appointments of God. In embracing a religious life you will find a treaſure which exceeds all the riches and bleſſings of this world, a treaſure which makes the poor man rich and happy, and the rich and happy man ſtill richer and happier. Thus may you journey through life, enjoying the bleſſings which ſurround you, and the ſcriptures which tell you rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil; wherefore you muſt needs be ſubject not only for wrath but for conſcience ſake. That it is your duty to render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour, to love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king. May ſuch portions of ſcripture have due influence upon your mind, and the "Remembrance of them live within the book "and volume of your brain unmixed with baſer "matter," prays

Your affectionate

Friend and brother,

MERCATOR.

Nov. 1, 1793.

HEAV'N from all creatures hides the book of Fate,
All but the page prefcrib'd, their preſent ſtate:
From brutes what men, from men what ſpirits know,
Or who could ſuffer Being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day,
Had he thy Reaſon, would he ſkip and play?
Pleas'd to the laſt, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand juſt rais'd to ſhed his blood.
Oh blindneſs to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n,
Who ſees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero periſh, or a ſparrow fall,
Atoms or ſyſtems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burſt, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions ſoar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
What future bliſs, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that Hope to be thy bleſſing now.
Hope ſprings eternal in the human breaſt;
Man never Is, but always To be bleſt:
The ſoul, uneaſy and confin'd from home,
Reſts and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whoſe untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His ſoul proud Science never taught to ſtray
Far as the ſolar walk, or milky way;
Yet ſimple Nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;

Some

Some ſafer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier iſland in the wat'ry waſte,
Where ſlaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Chriſtians thirſt for gold.
To Be, contents his natural deſire,
He aſks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire:
But thinks, admitted to that equal ſky,
His faithful dog ſhall bear him company.

Go, wiſer thou! and in thy ſcale of ſenſe,
Weigh thy Opinion againſt Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancieſt ſuch,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Deſtroy all creatures for thy ſport or guſt,
Yet cry, if Man's unhappy, God's unjuſt;
If man alone engroſs not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his juſtice, be the God of God.
In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
All quit their ſphere, and ruſh into the ſkies.
Pride ſtill is aiming at the bleſt abodes,
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
Aſpiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
Aſpiring to be Angels, Men rebel:
And who but wiſhes to invert the laws
Of Order, ſins againſt th' Eternal Cauſe.

Pope.

APOLOGY.

IT may by ſome perſons be conſidered ſingular, as dictatorally aſſuming and bordering upon diſobedience for a ſon to correct the errors of a father. The author of theſe letters ſubmits to ſuch cenſure with humiliation, and in acknowledging the ſingularity, he ſincerely wiſhes the inſtances may be as rare as the ſtricteſt honour, duty, filial affection, and gratitude, forbid.—— Many and mighty are the reaſons he might advance in defence of this admonition, one of which is, the certainty he anticipates of his work being well conſidered by the perſons addreſſed to more than once, and that with a partiality in his favor which may cover his imperfections. But, ſhould his labours fail, and he be ſucceſsleſs there, he has ſtill a further inducement; he would guard, if poſſible, a little riſing generation which ſurrounds him, from that damp, that chilling influence and infection which is abroad in the world, and which on his ſudden recall from this tranſitory ſtate would be inculcated in them by precepts and the force of education.——Youth and health are precarious dependencies, and ſhould death " that " fell ſergeant," be untimely in his arreſt, this is all by which he could poſſibly defend them from thoſe malicious prejudices which would render them the peſts of ſociety and as cumberers of the

the ground. Can he then be careleſs and lukewarm towards thoſe his ſoul cleaves to with all its powers and affections? No; he would tranſmit to them his religious tenets and principles as hereditary poſſeſſions which it is their duty to improve; and which, by improving, they may enjoy all the privileges and domeſtic comforts of this life, and at the ſame time be preparing themſelves for that ſtate, and that Being, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life, death, and immortality.

LETTER

LETTER I.

Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Rev. iii. 2.

DEAR FATHER,

COULD I have thought it poſſible for you to have ſeparated yourſelf from our holy communion without ſinning, and thereby being the cauſe of others being bewildered in the ſame pernicious errors, you would not have received this reproof from me. But when I conſider you as you really are, at the head of encreaſing and riſing families, as a man whoſe children, and whoſe children's children, are perhaps looking up to as their guide and dictator, I may juſtly be alarmed; how far I am intereſted in this view I have already ſhewn.—However few and confined may be the hours I can devote to this employment, for ſleepleſs nights and earneſt prayers, I ſhould be more than ten-fold paid could I bring you to a ſenſe of your imprudence in hazarding your ſpiritual and eternal welfare by ſeparating yourſelf from that church which till the evening of your days you profeſſed to adhere to. But in the

the undertaking of this taſk (arduous as it may appear) I feel an encouragement in the certainty I have that you will read repeatedly and with pleaſure whatever may come from me, and with ſuch an aſſurance of finding favour in your eyes I may reaſonably hope to find room in your heart, nor can I with ſuch a proſpect be too diligent in a good work.——There is perhaps, in human nature, nothing more fruitful than error; when once a man indulges or gives way to one falſe principle; in the corruption of his heart he generally feels a propenſity (if he does not check it) to proceed in error, and thus having ſet out with one falſe notion it may lead him to an hundred, till he even ſeeks for novelties that may carry him ſtill farther out of the way; and as the child who plays with fire till he is burnt, ſo is the man who ventures on poiſon till he wiſhes to feed upon it.—In the preſent diſaffection which has exiſtence, from partial views, limited and contracted notions of governments, &c. men are led to ſeek and to form new notions and opinions of religion. And I will ſay, that I never knew a man of this deſcription but who thought he muſt look for ſome new way of ſerving God, different from what he had done or had been taught to do; this I am convinced was the miſfortune that induced you to forſake all that is calculated to make life comfortable, and form to yourſelf principles inconſiſtent with the general tenor of the benevolent goſpel, and contradictory to the nature and attributes of God.

Among the many publications which are buſily circulated to bias and prejudice the minds of men, we

we find a recent production of the noted Thomas Paine.—I ever conſidered that author as poſſeſſing an head and heart capable of exerciſing his pen as an engine of ſedition and diſunion, and as ſtraining every nerve to riſe in the temple of fame by ſingularity; in which he has exerted himſelf with no ſmall degree of enthuſiaſm; but this his laſt effort, to propagate infidelity in a chriſtian country, far ſurpaſſes every thing, for impiety, that might have been expected, inſomuch, that I know many of the diſciples of that unbeliever who dread the circulation of this infamous book, reaſonably judging what he has gained in ſurface, would here be loſt in depth. And well am I perſuaded that the chriſtian who reads the Age of Reaſon, will think with me,

" *That 'tis a monſter of ſuch frightful mein,*
" *That to be hated needs but to be ſeen.*"

It has for its object the introduction of deiſm amongſt us; it denies the power aſcribed to the goſpel of Chriſt, as the means of deſtroying death, and bringing life and immortality to light. The ſcriptures, thoſe lively oracles of God, are repreſented as rank falſhood, in point of abſurdity, only to be equalled by the heathen mythology; and our bleſſed Redeemer as an impoſtor, or at beſt, as nothing more than a revolutioniſt or reformer. He ſays, " in truth there is no ſuch " thing as redemption, that it is fabulous, and " that man ſtands in the ſame relative condition " with his Maker he ever did ſince man exiſted." The chriſtian who reads ſuch bewildered doctrine, is at once filled with horror at the unbelief, and

compaſſion for the weakneſs, of thoſe who ſhould be led to think favourably of it*.

It is not my deſign herein to enter at large into a refutation of ſuch abſurdities, the little time and attention I have, would be but ill employed in ſo doing; nor is it neceſſary I ſhould at large ſet forth what is a ſtanding witneſs in every man's own conſcience, and written in the law of his heart; namely, that he is born in ſin, has ſinned, his nature is corrupt and prone to evil, and that it is alone by the powerful interceſſion of a bleſſed Redeemer, that he can be reſtored to that ſtate of everlaſting felicity and perfection he is permitted to hope for. It is evident that the author of the publication here alluded to, intended to ſtrike at the root of the chriſtian revelation, and deſtroy it at a ſtroke, when he affirmed it to be a palpable falſhood; but the excellency of Chriſt and his ſalvation, is eſtabliſhed on a rock immoveable; nor do I think that any one is ſo blindly prejudiced as to think all is right by the light of nature, or that by the power thereof we are enabled to ſee all neceſſary truth with ſtrength

* It was doubtleſs neceſſary for Mr. Paine, in his preſent ſituation, to produce the Age of Reaſon, as conſiſtent with the principles of that barbarous and atheiſtical faction under whom he is in durance vile; and was an uninformed perſon to read it he might poſſibly conceive the author to exiſt in a country diſtinct for its purity, and by nature free from ſin. But what muſt he think of this nation of perfectioniſts, who daily murder in cool blood, not only royalty and the advocates for it, but their priſoners, and hundreds of thoſe who are firmly, though blindly, attached to the cauſe they wiſh to eſtabliſh.

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to follow it. Should I ever ſee ſuch weakneſs gain upon the minds of men, I ſhall be ready to think the age of reaſon has produced an age of miracles.

But it would be well for the promulgers of this kind of doctrine, if they could with any conſiſtency in extolling the ſufficiency, and perfections, of human nature, account for ſome of its imperfections; and tell us why we are thus afflicted with diſeaſes, pains, fevers, leproſies, the terrors of death, and all the "thouſand natural "ſhocks that fleſh is heir to." Call them imperfections, call them infirmities, or whatever you will; we ſtill experience them, and in a degree ſufficient to convince every man: (who contemplates on the wickedneſs and vices, inward and outward of every kind, which overſpreads the face of the earth;) that he is in a fallen ſtate.

The bible, throughout the whole of it, affirms, that we are by nature dead, in treſpaſſes and ſins; and who can contemplate on the frailties of our natures, the evil deſires of our hearts, and not be convinced that original tranſgreſſion, is the ſource and ſpring of all the calamities, entailed upon our natures. Murders, treaſons, rebellions, wars and rumours of wars, are decreed; and as they are decreed, ſo are they found, as common as rain, ſnow, or the benefits of nature; nor is it poſſible for the boaſted reaſon of falſe philoſophy, to ſubſtitute a remedy for the leaſt evil, or account for them in any given manner, contradictory to that divine plan and heavenly œconomy, which is tranſmitted to us in the ſacred writings.

But the buſy, and unſeaſonable, abuſe of the ſcriptures, by thoſe nice ſpeculators, who demand occular and mental demonſtration, of their truth and efficacy; calls for anſwer, and though they are objections eaſily anſwered; yet they are wickedly calculated, and intended to diſturb, perplex, and raiſe vain ſcruples in the minds of thoſe who are weak enough to be allured by every bait or novelty held out. But who can behold the ſacred writings, and not conclude, the compilers thereof were not evangelically inſpired; who can examine their inward excellency, and not ſee the finger of God, pointing out to weak mortals, the way to eternal happineſs. The grand truths there laid down, of the nature and perfections of God, are adapted to every capacity; at once exciting humility, and gratitude; and in our preſent ſtate of imperfection, ignorance, and corruption, we muſt be content to know God in the manner the ſcriptures repreſent to us, or not at all. It therefore becomes every chriſtian, to conſider and believe, that it was in mercy to our infirmities, that the holy Spirit, vouchſafed to give us ſuch repreſentations, of the divine nature, and his attributes, as may awaken our deſires to a love of holineſs, and engage us to walk in thoſe ways of pleaſantneſs, and paths of peace, which are there preſcribed for us.

The deiſt preſumes to diſpute the oracles of God; meerly becauſe they contain ſomethings beyond his comprehenſion, or rather becauſe ſome parts are more edifying than others, but let the chriſtian aſk himſelf if this is a reaſon, why he ſhould

ſhould be taught to reject the whole; let him look at what he can comprehend; and conſult the beſt commentators on what he cannot.

Should it be aſked why ſome things are not more clear to us, I would aſk, why are not light, and colours, diſtinguiſhed by a perſon born blind, but becauſe he is in a ſtate that he wants faculties to diſcern them: even ſo it is with us; we are in an imperfect ſtate, and muſt wait for that ſeaſon, (which is approaching) for the clear diſcerning of thoſe things, which in our preſent ſtate, we cannot attain to a knowledge of. "We now ſee through "a glaſs, darkly; but then face to face: now I "know in part; but then I ſhall know even as I alſo am known," is the apoſtles obſervation, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. Thus it is then, that though our knowledge of divine things is imperfect: yet we know them in part, and find the greateſt conſolation, under the moſt mortifying afflictions, by adopting thoſe methods, ſo proper for our condition, which are held forth to us in the chriſtian revelation; by there ſeeking, we may find what was intended by our almighty Creator, a univerſal remedy for all our evils and corruptions; a ſovereign balm for every wound; and from a thankful acquieſcence, of this adorable providence; ſprings a principle of real, diſintereſted, benevolence to all mankind, a principle, conſiſtent with our ideas of an almighty God; and ſuch as repreſents him as the moſt perfect, juſt, and holy Being: it is in this, and this alone, that true happineſs is to be found. How fooliſh, and blindly prejudiced then muſt be the man; who would forſake all that is calculated

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to make him happy, on the poor authority of thoſe deluded mortals; who, forgetting they are but duſt and aſhes, build upon error, and who would eſtabliſh upon falſe views, principles which are pregnant with the moſt abſurd and dangerous conſequences.

And what can be produced from that ſyſtem, or that wild enthuſiaſm, which denies, and oppoſes, on the grounds of human liberty, the univerſality of divine goodneſs, in the diſpenſation of the moſt valuable mercies; which are vouchſafed, in the ſalvation of the world, by Jeſus Chriſt. I ſay, what can ſuch oppoſition to this divine love and order produce. Can it turn the bitter draught of affliction to a ſweet cordial? can it ſupport us under the perils, and afflictions, or even the thoughts of death, much leſs of death itſelf? no! and the man who thus vainly ſubſtitutes good for evil, light for darkneſs, and bitter for ſweet; muſt at that ſwift approaching hour, be wretched indeed; and as a ſheep without a ſhepherd. It therefore becomes the chriſtian to pray to Chriſt for that ſtrength, and that grace, which can guard him againſt the enemy who is intent, and watchful, to deprive him of all that is deſirable to render life truly happy; and it becomes the teachers of the goſpel of Chriſt, of all denominations, (who look to that grand ſource as the one thing needful) not to turn their attacks upon each other, in contentions of modes and forms of diſcipline, but to unite; and look with jealouſy, on this monſter, which appears in ſo "queſtionable a ſhape," inviting men, as citizens of the world, to rebel; and ſpurn at all order,

order, ſacred or human. May it be the laſt effort of aſpiring ambition, to cauſe diviſion and diſunion in the church of Chriſt: and may the profeſſors of chriſtianity, of all denominations, ſupplicate God (who alone can order the unruly wills of men) according to the purport of that full, and expreſſive petition, in our excellent litany, "from all ſedition, privy conſpiracy, and rebel-"lion; from all falſe doctrine, hereſy, and ſchiſm; "from hardneſs of heart, and contempt of thy "holy word and commandments, good Lord de-"liver us."

After what I have here advanced, it only remains for me to beſeech you, ſeriouſly to apply theſe remarks, which though but imperfectly ſtated, yet duly conſidered, they may be proofs ſufficiently ſatisfactory to convince you that you are not at liberty to ſeparate yourſelf from a communion, which has for its baſis; the everlaſting intereſts of the goſpel diſpenſation: and the ſacraments thereby appointed. Such a ſeparation, was, by the great Calvin, conſidered as ſchiſm; and as ſin of a very heinous nature. Actuated by a ſincere, and affectionate concern, for your ſpiritual and eternal welfare: I would have you turn from the thick darkneſs of erroneous prejudice and ſinful obſtinacy, into that marvellous light, of the truth, which in compaſſion to our infirmities, God has called us. I might greatly enlarge, by ſetting forth the bleſſings of redemption; and comparing it with that vain, and miſerable change, which is forcing its way into the world, and in which the religion of Jeſus has ſo little

little a ſhare. But I have already far exceeded what I intended, when the idea firſt ſuggeſted itſelf to me, of pointing out a few errors, which may ſhew you the unwarrantableneſs of a ſeparation; (in any degree) from that church you have forſaken.—Theſe imperfect remarks, I ſubmit to your conſideration, earneſtly exhorting you, from a conſideration of yourſelf, and the weak ſtate in which you ſtand by nature, to reconcile yourſelf to all that can make you happy, acknowledge your error, and thereby through the fountain head, Chriſt Jeſus, come unto God; and be made a worthy partaker of his heavenly feaſt, the holy ſacrament. It will ever be my ſincere wiſh and earneſt prayer, that God will " bring into the way " of truth, all ſuch as have ſo erred, and are ſo " deceived."

I cannot finally lay down my pen, without addreſſing a few lines to thoſe younger branches of my own family, I would have brought up in the knowledge of their duty, by firmly adhering to what has been the care of all ages in the chriſtian world. And I earneſtly beg of God, for his ſake, to incline their hearts to keep thoſe laws, which are holy, juſt, and good, that thereby they may enjoy thoſe bleſſed means, inſtruments, and opportunities, which aſſiſt in promoting our everlaſting intereſts, in the doctrine and examples of our Saviour; in the convincing force of his miracles, his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion; the preaching of the apoſtles, and the ſealing the truth of the goſpel with their blood. And ſhould any mad enthuſiaſt, or popular unbeliever, tempt them

to

to neglect theſe means of grace, and deſpiſe the ſacred ordinances of the church; may they reſiſt him with the courage, which faith and truth inſpires: ever conſidering the commands of God, as higher claims to their attention.

Our liturgy inſtructs all, to worſhip God in the beauty of his holineſs; and we believe that God has appointed thoſe means and ordinances, by which we aſſemble, in the name, and by the authority of Jeſus Chriſt. But this our form of worſhip, is (by thoſe whoſe ambition it is to ſcatter ſtrife and provoke diſunion) repreſented as coming near the church of Rome. This artifice, which is practiſed on young and unexperienced minds, is the invention of thoſe, that would rejoice at the ſubverſion of the regal government, and apoſtolic form, of the chriſtian church, as eſtabliſhed. But how far thoſe malicious aſperſions are true, may be readily ſeen, by examining whether our church does, impoſe upon us, any of thoſe perſecutions, ſuperſtitious rites, &c. which the church of Rome, does upon its members, by way of abſolution, &c. Are we like them, compelled to a belief of tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, worſhipping of ſaints, and images, &c. No: our church, as eſtabliſhed, diſclaims them as it alſo does, a dependence on our own, moral righteouſneſs in the light of God; at the ſame time, it generouſly tolerates all modes and forms of worſhip. But if every important truth, and religious obſervance, muſt be neglected or deſpiſed, becauſe uſed by the Romans, it muſt be confeſſed there

are many things in our communion ſinful, if all that correſponds with theirs is ſo. For we kneel at our devotions, ſacraments, and ſupplications. We bow at the name of Jeſus Chriſt, and our miniſters officiate, in a decent ſtated habit. Now theſe are things ſelected, and harped upon as conforming to popery, but how falſe is this view of things; and how abſurd, is it to think, that things which are not ſinful in themſelves, ſhould be conſidered ſo for being made uſe of by the papiſts; for the ſame reaſons we may refuſe to believe in the ſcriptures, or in Chriſt.—At our devotions we kneel: but not in imitation of them, nor do we reject, that humiliating poſture, becauſe approved of by them, but I conceive it to be adopted for more ſubſtantial reaſons, than either of theſe.

We find in *Luke* xxii, that our Saviour kneeled down and prayed; he not conſidering any poſture too humble. In *Matt.* xxvi, we find that he fell on his face, and prayed, on the ground. We likewiſe find the martyr Stephen, when he was going to be put to death, kneeled down, and prayed, for his murderers. The apoſtle Peter prayed kneeling: Paul kneeled down and prayed, and all the company that were with him, on the bare ſhore, *Acts* xxi. Thus it is evident the church adopts this ſuitable, proper, and humiliating poſture; from the example of our Saviour himſelf, and thoſe great apoſtles.——We uſe a form of prayer; and in this we have the example of our Saviour, who taught his diſciples a prayer, to be uſed as a ſtanding form for ever; and on that account,

account, I ſhall ever think myſelf at liberty, to conſider ſuch a ſound form of prayer, as that uſed by our church, to be not leſs acceptable to God, than new or extemporary prayers; for he who was filled with the ſpirit, in an unlimited manner; and infinitely above all that ever was, or ever will be, upon earth; even he we find prayed (in the greateſt extremity) expreſſing the ſame words ſeveral times, or by form; thus by the direction, or practice, of our Saviour, we pray by form. And by our bleſſed form of prayer, we can weigh and reflect on what we are about to utter, with ſolemn premeditation; and by it, we are ſecured from tranſgreſſing that rule; delivered by the preacher *Eccleſiaſtes*, " Be not raſh with thy mouth, and let " not thy heart be haſty to utter any thing before " God." From what I have here advanced, let it not be thought that I diſapprove extemporary prayer, it muſt ever be thought highly of, and acceptable to God, when proceeding from an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, all I would infer from this defence of our communion is, that there does not appear to be the leaſt cauſe, for thoſe illiberal inſinuations; that the Church of England man, is partly a papiſt. Our church likewiſe obſerves the ſtated faſts, or feſtivals, appointed, ſuch as the birth of Chriſt; his circumciſion, crucifixion, reſurrection, aſcenſion, &c. appointments for thankſgiving, for the ſpiritual mercies and bleſſings vouchſafed to the world by our Saviour, or his apoſtles; nor does it appear that theſe obſervances are any ways ſinful, popiſh, or ſuperſtitious, but appointments for us to hum-

ble ourſelves before God, for our ſins, or return thanks on account of the moſt ſignal circumſtances, whereby our redemption was accompliſhed, &c. And perhaps in thoſe who inveigh againſt theſe obſervances, as ſuperſtitious, &c. may be found, appointments, commemorations, anniverſaries, and occaſional ſeaſons to celebrate revolutions and other temporal occurrances. I believe it is generally allowed too; that in every religion, or church, there are ſome whoſe office it is to rule, and of courſe to give rules and directions, concerning the well-governing of the ſame. And we conclude that Chriſt and his apoſtles, have made due proviſion for the church, by leaving a full authority, to be tranſmitted through the ſeveral ages of the church, to perſons who ſhall be duly authoriſed and qualified, to receive ſuch appointments; to the end, that the houſehold of the church, may be continued in godlineſs. The apoſtles, who were its pillars, had ſucceſſors, who were to tranſmit their office, to the end of time. That biſhops, and paſtors, may diligently preach the word of God: and the people be obedient to follow the ſame. That we are bound in duty and conſcience, to obey, and ſubmit to the rulers of the church, is evident, from many parts of ſcripture; and what is required of us by their inſtructions, and injunctions, but the pleaſurable ſervice of God, in humility, due ſubmiſſion, and godly quietneſs. Such is the neceſſity there is for our conforming to the directors of the church; and with what ſincere devotion their bleſſing has been received, we are told in *Eccluſ.* iv. 21, "The "prieſt

" prieſt lifted up his hands, over the congregation,
" to give the bleſſing of the Lord with his lips:
" and they bowed themſelves down; that they
" might receive a bleſſing, from the moſt high."
It is not here conſidered that the effect of the bleſſing, does depend on the man; or the mortal like ourſelves, but upon the ordinance of God, from the mouth of his miniſter. Whom " God
" hath choſen to bleſs, in the name of the Lord,"
Deut. xxi. 5.

I do not contend that our religion, as eſtabliſhed in this land, is abſolute perfection; but far from it, but I ſhall ever conceive it to be conſiſtent; and as having a perfect analogy, to thoſe divine oracles of truth, the ſcriptures. And in invoking the aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, of a ſupreme Being, there cannot be any thing better ſuited, to the Majeſty of God; from weak man. Let not then religion be deſpiſed, but may it ever be conſidered on this land, as a chain which reaches to eternity, and of which God is the firſt link. " Go
" to its ſource, and ſee its excellence aſcend with
" it to heaven, from whence it deſcended, and
" whither it will return; without this tie, we are
" creatures only deſerving of contempt; the uni-
" verſe not worth our attention, for it is not the
" ſun nor the earth that makes its merit, but the
" glory of being a part of the ſupreme Being,"
and, according to the words of the apoſtle, to ſubſiſt only in Jeſus Chriſt. That this may be the happy portion of all mortals, I ſhall ever pray; and hereby conclude in the words of one of the

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collects of our church. " O merciful God, who " haſt made all men, and hateſt nothing that thou " haſt made, nor wouldeſt the death of a ſinner, " but rather that he ſhould be converted, and live; " have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and " Hereticks; and take from them all ignorance, " hardneſs of heart, and contempt of thy word; " and ſo fetch them home, bleſſed Lord, to thy " flock, that they may be ſaved among the rem- " nant of the true Iſraelites, and be made one " fold, under one Shepherd, Jeſus Chriſt our " Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and " the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. " *Amen.*"